

business to the health of his community. He works to promote enterprise and innovation as a member of the Chamber of Commerce and the Farm Bureau, and continues to operate his own small ranch.

Roger is committed to using his position as Guadalupe County Commissioner to promote orderly growth and fiscal responsibility. As a public servant and a volunteer, he has given an enormous amount back to the community in which he was born and raised. I am proud to have this opportunity to honor his service, and to thank him for all he has done for the people of Guadalupe County.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to have had this opportunity to recognize the many achievements of Guadalupe County Commissioner Roger Baenziger.

JOINT STATEMENT BY LEADERS OF PROTESTANT DENOMINATIONS

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 8, 2005

Ms. DeLAURO. Mr. Speaker, Budgets are moral documents, which reflect the values and priorities of our nation. Drawing from my own faith, the Catholic Bishops have stated, "The obligation to provide justice for all means that the poor have the single most urgent economic claim on the conscience of the nation." The more I hear this Administration's justification for the harsh decisions within their budget, the more I believe that there is no justification. This budget simply reflects the wrong values and priorities. That is why I would like to enter for today's RECORD a joint statement by the leaders of five mainline Protestant denominations representing over 20 million followers in the United States. These religious leaders today called President Bush's 2006 federal budget "unjust."

The statement is signed by: the Most Reverend Frank Griswold, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church USA, the Right Reverend Mark Hanson, Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, the Reverend Dr. Clifton Kirkpatrick, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church (USA), United Church of Christ General Minister and President John H. Thomas, and James Winkler, General Secretary of the General Board of Church and Society of the United Methodist Church.

JOINT STATEMENT

WASHINGTON, DC, Mar. 8, 2005.—We are preachers, and so, in explaining our opposition to the 2006 Federal Budget that President Bush has sent to Congress, it seems only fitting that we should begin with Scripture.

There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man's table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. In Hades, where he was being tormented, he looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. He called out, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in agony in these flames."

The passage comes from 16th chapter of the Gospel according to Luke, and it contains a warning that should deeply trouble those of us who live in a wealthy nation. As the story continues, the rich man implores Abraham to raise Lazarus from the dead and send him to the house of his brothers so that they may be spared his torment.

"They have Moses and the prophets," Abraham replies. "They should listen to them." The rich man says, "No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent." And Abraham answers, "If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead."

In telling this story, Jesus makes clear that perpetrating economic injustice is among the gravest of sins. Yet self-interest is so deeply ingrained in each one of us, he says, that we will not renounce it, even should someone rise from the dead. Jesus was right about that. It was he who rose from the dead to save us from greed and myriad other sins. Yet those who have much continue feasting, even as those who have little remain at their gates.

Like many Americans, we read our daily newspaper through the lens of faith, and when we see injustice, it is our duty to say so. The 2006 Federal Budget that President Bush has sent to Capitol Hill is unjust. It has much for the rich man and little for Lazarus. According to the White House's own numbers, this budget would move 300,000 people off food stamps in the next five years. It would cut the funds that allow 300,000 children to receive day care. It would reduce funding for Medicaid by \$45 billion over the next ten years, and this at a time when 45 million Americans—the highest level on record—are already without health insurance.

These cuts would be alarming in any circumstances, but in the context of the 2006 budget, they are especially troubling. For even as it reduces aid to those in poverty, this budget showers presents on the rich. If passed in its current form, it would make permanent tax cuts that have bestowed nearly three quarters of the "relief" on one-fifth of the country. If passed in its current form, it would include whopping new cuts that would benefit, almost exclusively, those with household incomes of more than \$200,000 per year. If passed in its current form, it would take Jesus' teaching on economic justice and stands it on its head.

Some contend that these cuts will stimulate the economy and improve life for all Americans, but we believe that stocking the rich man's larder is a peculiar strategy for getting Lazarus more food. Not only does this policy rest on dubious economic assumptions, but it asks the poor to pay the cost for a prosperity in which they may never share.

Some contend that works of mercy are not the business of the government but of private citizens. But in what other area of our national life do we formulate policies uninformed by our deepest values?

Some contend that with the proper support faith-based charities will step forward to fill the gap created by the government's retreat. But this flies in the face of the lessons that we, as religious leaders, have learned first hand. Our churches operate thousands of charities from the parochial to the international. Believe us when we tell you that neither we, nor our Evangelical brothers and sisters, nor our friends of other faiths have anywhere near the resources to turn back the rising tide of poverty in this country. We know that programs, whether governmental or non-profit, can change people's lives for the better. New situations challenge us to respond to new conditions and to support those who are in transition out of poverty. Sadly,

the 2006 budget will send more people searching for food in cupboards that, quite frequently, are bare.

Our churches will continue their ameliorative ministries. But it is not enough for us as a Church or a society to be merciful. We must remember the admonition of the prophet Micah. "And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God?" Micah's choice of verbs is instructive. We are not to love justice or preach justice, we are to do justice—to act, and, when necessary, to struggle.

We urge the members of our churches, of other churches and other faiths, and all whose conscience compels them to do justice to join us in opposing this budget. Write to your representatives. Write to your local newspaper. Join the organizations working to obtain justice for the 36 million Americans living below the poverty line, the 45 million without health insurance and the unknown millions struggling to keep their families from slipping into these ever increasing ranks. Together, let us pledge ourselves to creating a nation in which economic policies are infused with the spirit of the man who began his public ministry almost 2,000 years ago by proclaiming that God had anointed him "to bring good news to the poor."

Signed by:

The Most Reverend FRANK T. GRISWOLD,

*Presiding Bishop and
Primate of the Epis-
copal Church, USA.*

The Right Reverend MARK HANSON,

*Presiding Bishop of
the Evangelical Lu-
theran Church in
America.*

The Reverend Dr. CLIFTON KIRKPATRICK,

*Stated Clerk of the
General Assembly,
Presbyterian
Church, (U.S.A.).*

The Reverend JOHN H. THOMAS,

*General Minister and
President, United
Church of Christ.*

Mr. JAMES WINKLER,

*General Secretary,
General Board of
Church and Society,
United Methodist
Church.*

JOB TRAINING IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2005

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2005

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 27) to enhance the workforce investment system of the Nation by strengthening one-stop career centers, providing for more effective governance arrangements, promoting access to a more comprehensive array of employment, training, and related services, establishing a targeted approach to serving youth, and improving performance accountability, and for other purposes:

Ms. McCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to H.R. 27, the so-called Job Training Improvement Act of 2005.

Millions of Americans are unemployed today and finding it harder to get a job. According to the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, job seekers in Minnesota still out-number unfilled jobs by two-to-one.

Unfortunately, H.R. 27 does nothing to put people back to work. It doesn't shorten the lists of people waiting to use the resources at my one stops. It won't meet the needs of the approximately 8,000 Minnesota youth who can't get WIA job-related services every year. Instead, this bill unravels the very programs that ensure these workers have the skills and training they need to find high paying, long-term jobs.

H.R. 27 eliminates targeted programs designed to help both dislocated workers and unemployed adults find a job. It block grants dedicated assistance forcing low-income workers and welfare recipients to compete with dislocated workers for the same limited federal resources.

This bill eliminates dedicated funding for job search services, like Minnesota's Job Bank, which assists thousands of Minnesotans. This funding supports a rapid response system that meets the immediate needs of workers affected by mass layoffs. These changes threaten to break apart Minnesota's statewide workforce development system at the very time when these services are needed most to help unemployed workers find jobs.

In addition, H.R. 27 does nothing to ensure that these limited funds are used for training. It allows governors to take money away from adult education and veterans' job programs and use it to cover bureaucratic costs. Sadly, it also restricts youth funding to out-of-school youth. This will devastate the Building Lives Program, which Ramsey County uses to provide job training services to troubled teens during school hours.

Most concerning, however, is that this bill repeals basic civil rights protections for employees of job training programs by allowing organizations that receive Federal job-training funds to discriminate on the basis of religion.

I speak as a person who was brought up by a Lutheran mother and a Catholic father. I remember when my mother went to church to see her little girl receive her first communion and wasn't made to feel welcome. I don't want to go back to those days. I don't want the children I represent to know how it feels to be kept from fulfilling their dreams or meet their potential because someone doesn't like the church, mosque or synagogue you attend. Yet, this bill leads our country in that direction.

Mr. Chairman, I strongly believe that we must strengthen our workforce investment system to help Minnesotans get back to work. H.R. 27, however, fails to meet that goal and at the same time encourages rolling back civil rights protections. I urge my colleagues to reject this bill today.

RECOGNIZING THE ACHIEVEMENTS
OF COMAL COUNTY COMMISSIONER JACK DAWSON

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 8, 2005

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the accomplishments of Commis-

sioner Jack Dawson. Commissioner Dawson is a life-long resident of Texas and a pillar of the Comal County community.

From his first career as a computer programmer for Shell Oil to his current seat as a Comal County Commissioner, Jack Dawson has served his community with distinction.

Jack Dawson opened what is now Dawson Realty with his wife Bonnie, and he has also founded the local subdivisions first homeowners association.

Commissioner Dawson has spent his life in the service of the public. As the Board President of Canyon Lake Volunteer Fire Department, he helped to form new fire and emergency services districts for the community. He has consistently worked to improve the local communities of Comal County and the State of Texas.

Commissioner Jack Dawson has lived with his wife Bonnie Dawson in Comal County since 1976.

He is a man that understands community needs and the value of hard work.

Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to recognize the accomplishments of Comal County Commissioner Jack Dawson.

RECOGNIZING CORPORAL BARRON
SMITH AND HIS ENDLESS COM-
MUNITY SERVICE

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 8, 2005

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend Corporal Barron Smith of the Flower Mound Police Department, located in the 26th Congressional District of Texas, for his heroism in saving another man's life.

Corporal Smith, without regard to his own life, quickly leapt into a local lake after seeing a man beginning to drown. In the summer of 2004, Corporal Smith and his wife were camping at Grapevine Lake when they noticed a group of people having difficulty swimming in the lake. As two men began to go under, Corporal Smith decided to jump in with a life vest in an attempt to rescue the individuals. One man was able to swim to a buoy just as Corporal Smith reached the second man and helped him to shore.

Corporal Smith's act of bravery represents the best of "Texas' Finest." Officers like Corporal Smith are exemplary and are ideal citizens. His continuing service to his community, on-and-off duty, makes our community safer.

I am proud of the Flower Mound Police Department and especially our attentive citizens, like Corporal Smith, who commit their lives and time to protect and serve our community at any time, anywhere.

HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS
OF GUADALUPE COUNTY COM-
MISSIONER JIM WOLVERTON

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 8, 2005

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Guadalupe County Commissioner Jim

Wolverton for the important contributions he has made to his community.

Jim Wolverton is the son of a military family, and was born in Frankfurt, Germany. He moved to Texas at the age of two, and attended Samuel Clemens High School and San Antonio Junior College.

For nine years, Jim owned an electrical contracting business, and learned important lessons about leadership and organization. He has now put those lessons to work for the citizens of Guadalupe County, to great effect.

Under his supervision, Guadalupe County has passed legislation which greatly increased the amount of money available for health care for the indigent. He increased county services such as Fire, MES, and Libraries, and supervised the construction of a new, fourteen million dollar jail facility. He has worked with the municipalities in his district to establish quality, long-term business growth, and has worked with organizations outside the county government to ensure an adequate water supply for the residents of Guadalupe County. Jim Wolverton is an intelligent and committed public servant, and the citizens of Guadalupe County are better off as a result of his work.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have had this opportunity to honor the contributions of Guadalupe County Commissioner Jim Wolverton.

YEAR TWO OF CASTRO'S BRUTAL
CRACKDOWN IN CUBA

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 8, 2005

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of democratic reformers in Cuba, on the second anniversary of Castro's brutal crackdown of pro-democracy advocates.

Two years ago, with the world's attention riveted on Iraq, Fidel Castro ordered his feared State Security apparatus to round up at least 75 of Cuba's bravest and brightest, prominent and lesser-known dissidents. Among these are 28 independent journalists and 40 Varela project workers. With sickening speed, these men and women were paraded before kangaroo courts and given prison sentences ranging from 6 to 28 years. 61 remain in jail.

When the Committee on International Relations met April 16, 2003 to decry this vile abrogation of justice, I stated at that time: "Even some of the most outspoken leftists, who once saw in Fidel Castro something to admire, now admit that Castro's unbridled cruelty, thirst for blood and extreme paranoia are indefensible."

I regret to report that Castro has given me no cause to reassess that statement.

What were the so-called crimes of these brave men and women? Advocating democracy . . . writing as independent journalists . . . being men and women of faith . . .

Their real offense was to dare to question the authority of a single man, Mr. Castro. The Cuban Revolution is really about Castro's vanity and pursuit of personal power. From the beginning, Castro has shot and jailed anyone—even his close friends—who has dared get in the way of his personal ambition.

Dictatorships, reflecting the whims of a despot, always subject their people to deprivations and absurdities. The Castro regime recently let a handful of its political prisoners out